

# Warning: Dangerous Counterfeit Prescription Tablets Found in Ohio

Counterfeit/fake prescription tablets that look like alprazolam (Xanax®) and oxycodone (Oxycontin®) are being sold in Ohio. They contain fentanyl, a powerful drug that can kill, and other contents that could cause death.

The number and letter markings, colors, and scoring lines on the fake pills make them look identical to the real/legitimate pills. It is nearly impossible to tell the difference with the naked eye.

Fake tablets are **not** being given out by licensed healthcare providers. They often are sold online through social media or "dark web" hidden websites and are also sold person-to-person by sellers who claim they are real.

**NEVER take a tablet or any prescription medication that is not from a licensed healthcare provider.**

**Note: Levels of deadly drugs can vary from tablet to tablet, even if they are from the same batch. If you have any pills that are not from a licensed healthcare provider, DO NOT take any more.**

Signs that tablets could be fake:

- The tablets do not come from a licensed healthcare provider.
- The tablets are not in prescription packaging (such as a labeled pill bottle).
- The tablets are being sold individually or in unusually small quantities.
- The tablets are being sold in unusually large quantities.

It is often difficult to determine if a pill is legitimate or counterfeit. Below are examples.

## Alprazolam/Xanax® Counterfeit prescription alprazolam and Xanax® tablets have been seized in Ohio.

Legitimate pills	Fake pills	Common slang
		Zannies Xan/Zan
		Bars Hulks
		Ladders

## Oxycodone/OxyContin® Counterfeit prescription M 30 and A 215 oxycodone tablets have been seized in Ohio.

Legitimate pills	Fake pills	Common slang
		Oxy Roxy
	No image available.	30s

Fentanyl is an opioid painkiller that can cause severe breathing problems or death in high doses.

## Signs to watch for

The following symptoms could be a sign that you or someone you know has taken a high dose of fentanyl or another opioid:

- Unresponsiveness/being unconscious or passed out.
- Not breathing or slow breathing.
- Lips and nails turning the wrong color.
- Choking or coughing.
- Cold or clammy skin.
- Pupils in the eyes are extremely small.
- Dizziness or disorientation.

## How to help

Naloxone, also called NARCAN®, is a medication that can reverse an opioid overdose and save lives by blocking the effects of opioids on the brain and quickly restoring breathing. Naloxone is safe: If it is given to someone who has not taken opioids it causes no harm, and emergency medical professionals have used naloxone for more than 40 years.

Please note: Naloxone cannot be self-administered.

**If you believe you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 911.**

In crisis? Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or text "4HOPE" to 741741.

*If you witness an overdose, always call for help, even if you are afraid you could be arrested. Ohio's Good Samaritan Law protects you by allowing varying levels of immunity for people who call 911 during an overdose.*

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# Additional Recommendations

## For healthcare providers

Because of the increase in counterfeit prescription tablets with fentanyl and other potentially lethal contents, the Ohio Department of Health makes these recommendations to first responders, healthcare providers, substance abuse treatment professionals, community-based Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone) programs, and others who interact with people who use illicit drugs.

## Help individuals access and carry naloxone

Encourage patients/clients who use illicit drugs, as well as their family and friends, to carry naloxone. Refer them to a local Project DAWN community-based naloxone education and distribution program or refer them to a local pharmacy that dispenses naloxone. More information about where to obtain naloxone is available at [www.odh.ohio.gov/projectdawn](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/projectdawn). Naloxone is also available at most Ohio pharmacies without a prescription. A list of Ohio pharmacies offering naloxone is available at [www.pharmacy.ohio.gov/stopoverdose](http://www.pharmacy.ohio.gov/stopoverdose).

## Administer naloxone in drug overdoses when non-opioids are suspected/indicated

Even though naloxone is not effective in treating drug overdoses caused solely by stimulants such as cocaine and methamphetamines, the administration of naloxone may be helpful in drug overdoses caused by a combination of stimulants and opioids like fentanyl and its analogs.

## Educate patients/clients who use illicit substances about the dangers of drugs being mixed with fentanyl

Emphasize the increased risk of overdose and death. Key points can be found in the next column. Information to share with community members also is available at [www.OHAgainstOD.ohio.gov](http://www.OHAgainstOD.ohio.gov).

## Dangers of illicit drugs potentially mixed with fentanyl

- Fentanyl is often mixed with other drugs without the user's knowledge.
- Fentanyl is more likely to be fatal due to its high potency and the length of time it stays in the body.
- Avoid mixing drugs (including alcohol), which increases the risk of overdose.
- Do not use drugs while alone, so that someone else can help/get help if there is an overdose.
- The individual using drugs as well as family and friends should all be trained on the signs and symptoms of a drug overdose, where to get naloxone, how to administer it, how to do rescue breathing, and the importance of calling 911 immediately, even when naloxone is administered.
- Do not leave the ambulance or hospital against medical advice after naloxone has been administered to reverse the overdose. The naloxone may wear off before the opioids wear off – and you could go into overdose again, with loss of consciousness and slowing or stoppage of breathing.

## Additional contributors

- Miami Valley Regional Crime Lab.
- Ohio State Highway Patrol Crime Lab.
- Lake County Crime Lab.
- Columbus Division of Police Crime Lab.
- Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation Drug Chemistry Unit.

## Substance use treatment and behavioral health services

Healthcare providers can help refer patients/clients who use illicit drugs to treatment, or Ohioans can call the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services toll-free helpline at 1-877-275-6364, available 8 a.m.- 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The local alcohol, drug addiction and mental health services board (ADAMH) in your community can also help connect Ohioans with low-cost behavioral health services. Find your local ADAMH board at [www.mha.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/mha/community-partners/adamh-boards](http://www.mha.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/mha/community-partners/adamh-boards).

The Ohio CareLine, at 1-800-720-9616, offers 24/7 access to trained behavioral health professionals who can offer confidential support in times of personal or family crisis when individuals may be struggling to cope with challenges in their lives. When callers need additional services, they will receive assistance and connection to local providers.

Ohioans can also access behavioral health treatment providers through [www.findtreatment.gov](http://www.findtreatment.gov).

## Additional resources

- Information on obtaining naloxone, including by mail order:  
[odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/project-dawn/project-dawn-programs](http://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/project-dawn/project-dawn-programs).
- [U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency \(DEA\) One Pill Can Kill:](http://U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) One Pill Can Kill: www.dea.gov/onepill) [www.dea.gov/onepill](http://www.dea.gov/onepill).
- [DEA news release about counterfeit prescription tablets:](http://DEA news release about counterfeit prescription tablets: www.dea.gov/press-releases/2021/09/27/dea-issues-public-safety-alert) [www.dea.gov/press-releases/2021/09/27/dea-issues-public-safety-alert](http://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2021/09/27/dea-issues-public-safety-alert).